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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/602,873	06/25/2003	J. Edward Roth	FS-00743	2123

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09/08/2004

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EXAMINER

HUYNH, LOUIS K

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3721

DATE MAILED: 09/08/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/602,873

Applicant(s)

ROTH, J. EDWARD

Examiner

Louis K. Huynh

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 July 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 18-21 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 and 22-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 25 June 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 6/25/03.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election without traverse of Group I, claims 1-17 and 22-25, and canceling claims 18-21 of the nonelected invention in the reply filed on July 20, 2004 is acknowledged.

Drawings

2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the "serrate mechanism" (claims 5, 9, 12 & 23) and "the cutting mechanism" (claim 5) must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

3. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

5. Claims 1-17 and 22-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1, lines 3-4: “a loading position” is indefinite for it is unclear whether or not the loading position of the plate-like member is the same as the loading position of the loading bed.

Claim 1, line 4: “a second position” is indefinite for it is unclear whether or not the second position of the plate-like member is the same as the second position of the loading bed.

Claim 1, lines 6-8: “the sealing member...over the loading bed” is not true because the sealing member (108) does not always seal the wrap (W) when the plate-like member (102) is above the loading bed (104). See Figures 2-5 and 7-13.

Claim 1 is indefinite for omitting the structural relationship between the sealing member and the loading bed; therefore, it is unclear as to what is acting against the sealing member in order to seal the wrap. Furthermore, the claim lacks the structural/functional relationships between the movements of the loading bed and the plate-like member; therefore, it is unclear as to where the loading position and the second position of the plate-like member are with respect to the loading bed.

Claim 2, lines 2-3: “descending to a lowered position as the product is placed on the loading bed” is not true because the loading bed (104) does not move downward until all the product is placed on the loading bed. See Figure 14, steps 200-204.

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Claim 6, line 2: “a second position” is indefinite for it is unclear whether or not the second position of the hinged portion is the same as the second position of the plate-like member, or is the same as the second position of the loading bed.

Claim 8, line 2: “the product stacked on the loading bed” lacks proper antecedent basis because staking of the product on the loading bed has not been set forth.

Claim 12, line 4: “a loading position” is indefinite for it is unclear whether or not the loading position of the bag former mechanism is the same as the loading position of the loading bed.

Claim 12, line 4: “a second position” is indefinite for it is unclear whether or not the second position of the bag former mechanism is the same as the second position of the loading bed.

Claim 12, lines 6-8: “the sealing member...over the loading bed” is not true because the sealing member (108) does not always seals the wrap (W) when the bag former mechanism (102) is above the loading bed (104). See Figures 2-5 and 7-13.

Claim 12, lines 11-12: “a clamping ... proximate to the wrap” is indefinite for it is unclear as to where the clamping and serrate mechanism would be in the claimed apparatus since the wrap is a work piece and is not a part of the claimed apparatus.

Claim 12 is indefinite for omitting the structural relationship between the sealing member and the loading bed; therefore, it is unclear as to what is acting against the sealing member in order to seal the wrap. Furthermore, the claim lacks the structural relationship between the movements of the loading bed and the bag former mechanism; therefore, it is unclear as to where

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the loading position and the second position of the bag former mechanism are with respect to the loading bed.

Claim 13, lines 2-3: “descending to a lowered position during placement of the product on the loading bed” is not true because the loading bed (104) does not move downward until all the product is placed on the loading bed. See Figure 14, steps 200-204.

Claim 14, line 2: “a second position” is indefinite for it is unclear whether or not the second position of the hinged portion is the same as the second position of the bag former mechanism, or is the same as the second position of the loading bed.

Claim 15, line 2: “the second position” is indefinite for it is unclear as to which second position applicant is referring. Note that the hinged portion is connected to the bag former mechanism which is movable to its own second position.

Claim 17, lines 3-4: “the product stacked on the loading bed” lacks proper antecedent basis because staking of the product on the loading bed has not been set forth.

Claim 22, lines 13-14: “a member positioned proximate to the hinged portion, the member sealing a wrap about a group of sequenced mail objects” is ambiguous because it is unclear as to whether or not the sealing member is connected to the hinged portion. Note that the specification does not describe a sealing member that is positioned proximate to the hinged portion in such a way that the sealing member seals the wrap independently with respect to the hinged portion.

Claim 22 is indefinite for omitting the structural relationship between the sealing member and the loading bed; therefore, it is unclear as to what is acting against the sealing member in order to seal the wrap. Furthermore, the claim lacks the structural relationship between the

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movements of the loading bed and the bag former mechanism; therefore, it is unclear as to where the two positions of the bag former mechanism are with respect to the loading bed and or the two positions of the loading bed with respect to the bag former mechanism.

Claim 23, line 4: “the sealing member” lacks proper antecedent basis.

Claim 24 is confusing because it is unclear as to the movement of the loading bed with respect to the bag former mechanism and vice versa since the first and second positions are not determined.

Claim 25, lines 2-4: “the hinged portion rests...over the loading bed” is not true because the sealing member (108) does not always rest on the upper surface of the loading bed when the bag former mechanism (102) is above the loading bed (104). See Figures 2-5 and 7-13.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

7. Claims 1 and 22, as best understood, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Okinaka (US 4,903,459).

Okinaka discloses an apparatus including: a loading bed (34) movable between a loading position (FIG. 4) and a release position (FIG. 5); a plate-like member (lever 25) pivotable with respect to the loading bed (34) between a first position (FIG. 2) and a second position (FIG. 2) about a hinge pin (24), the plate-like member (25) having a hinged portion (30); a sealing

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member (53) at an end of the hinged portion (30) for sealing a wrap (101) about a product (100) to form a package (102) when the plate-like member (25) is positioned over the loading bed (34).

The apparatus of Okinaka includes an inherent conveyor for sequencing the product (100) onto the loading bed (34). Regarding the product being mail product as recited in claim 22, it has been held that a recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus satisfying the claimed structural limitations. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (1987).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claim 12, as best understood, is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okinaka (US 4,903,459) in view of Kujubu (US 5,386,678) and Bouressa (US 5,934,048).

Okinaka discloses an apparatus including: a loading bed (34) movable between a loading position (FIG. 4) and a release position (FIG. 5); a bag former mechanism (25, 30) pivotable with respect to the loading bed (34) between a first position (FIG. 2) and a second position (FIG. 2) about a hinge pin (24), the bag former mechanism having a hinged portion (30); a sealing member (53) at an end of the hinged portion (30) for sealing a wrap (101) about a product (100) to form a package (102) when the bag former mechanism (25, 30) is positioned over the loading bed (34); and a clamping mechanism (43 & 53) for clamping and sealing the wrap

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(101). The apparatus of Okinaka meets all of applicant's claimed subject matter except for a serrate mechanism for serrating the wrap after the wrap has been sealed.

Kujubu discloses a similar apparatus (10) wherein the wrap (38) is cut by a knife (93) after the wrap has been sealed in order to remove the unused upper portion of the wrap from the package. Therefore, it would have been obvious to an ordinary skilled person in the art, at the time the invention was made, to have modified the apparatus of Okinaka by having provided a cutting mechanism, as taught by Kujubu, in order to remove the unused portion of the wrap from the package.

The modified apparatus of Okinaka meets all of applicant's claimed subject matter but lacks the specific teaching of the cutting mechanism being a serrate mechanism. However, Bouressa disclose a cutting blade (1) being a serrate blade for separating thermoplastic bags. Therefore, it would have been obvious to an ordinary skilled person in the art, at the time the invention was made, to have further modified the apparatus of Okinaka by having a serrate mechanism, as taught by Bouressa, so that the wrap is firm held while being cut and the energy required for cutting will be reduced because of smaller piercing points of the serrate mechanism.

Allowable Subject Matter

10. Claims 2-11, 13-17 and 23-25 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure has been cited on form PTO-892 along with the applied prior art.

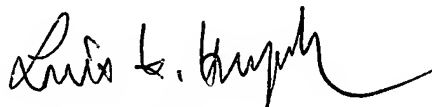
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12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Louis K. Huynh whose telephone number is (703) 306-5694.

The examiner can normally be reached on M-F from 9:30AM to 5:00PM.

13. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Rinaldi I. Rada can be reached on (703) 308-2187. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

14. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Louis K. Huynh
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 3721

September 3, 2004